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POINTS FOR MENTAL PRAYER

FROM

S. BONAVENTURE

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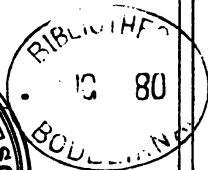


OPUS CONTEMPLATIONIS
DIVI BONAVENTURÆ:

POINTS FOR MENTAL PRAYER,

PARAPHRASED BY K. D. B.

(See Note, p. xvi).



LONDON: BURNS, OATES & Co.

1880.

138. 2. 531.



Monday.

FIRST FLOWER.

JESUS, Second Person of the Ineffable Trinity.

At Matins, consider 3 fruits:

The Trinity of Persons in the divine essence,
The Equality of the Persons in adorable majesty,
The Eternity of the Persons in perpetual immutability.

SECOND FLOWER.

JESUS, without whom nothing was made that was made.

At Prime, consider 3 fruits:

The power of God, in the creation of all things,
The wisdom of God, in the disposal of the same,
The goodness of God in the perfection of the universe.

THIRD FLOWER.

JESUS, loving Author of the dignity of mankind.

At Tierce, consider 3 fruits:

The separation of the Angels in their different states,
The transgression of man, through strong temptation,
The divine justice, rendering to all according to their works.

FOURTH FLOWER.

JESUS, promised to the Fathers, a Saviour to the hopeless.

At Sext, consider 3 fruits :

The disastrous ruin of the human race,
The devil's enmity, incessantly persuing man,
The pity of God, shown by repeated promises.

FIFTH FLOWER.

JESUS, provides for the dignity of His Mother.

At None, consider 3 fruits :

The Conception of Mary, marvellous and immaculate,
The admirable nurture of the Virgin presented in the temple,
The Espousals of Mary to the glorious Saint Joseph.

SIXTH FLOWER.

JESUS enters the Palace of Perpetual Virginity.

At Vespers, consider 3 fruits :

The adorable condescension of the Blessed Trinity,
The devout salutation of the Angel,
The humble submissiveness of the Virgin's reply.

SEVENTH FLOWER.

JESUS, unborn Babe, visits the unborn Baptist.

At Compline, consider 3 fruits :

The approach of the Babes, and their exultation,
The meeting of the Mothers, and their congratulations,
The attendance of the Fathers, and their admiration.



Tuesday.

FIRST FLOWER.

JESUS, entering the world, is born at Bethlehem.

At Matins, consider 3 fruits :

The diversity of the natures united in one Person,
The congruousness of all the circumstances,
The strangeness of the miracles bearing witness to Him.

SECOND FLOWER.

JESUS is circumcised, and receives His predestined Name.

At Prime, consider 3 fruits :

The strictness of the law, and its observance,
The dignity of the Child, shown by His Holy Name,
The pain of His Parents at the pain He endures.

THIRD FLOWER.

JESUS, orient Sun, is revealed to the Magi by a star.

At Tierce, consider 3 fruits :

The great haste of the Magi to behold the Child,
The great folly of the Jews, in resisting known truth,
The great want of the just, so long without Him.

FOURTH FLOWER.

JESUS, with the doves, is presented according to the law.

At Sext, consider 3 fruits :

The wondrous humility and devotion of the Offerers,
The wondrous worth and meaning of the Offerings,
The wondrous joy and gladness in the temple.

FIFTH FLOWER.

JESUS is borne into Egypt, while the Innocents are slain.

At None, consider 3 fruits :

The haste of Herod and the Jews to persecute Christ,
The lamentation of the mothers and their slaughtered babes,
The joy of the Fugitives in reaching Egypt safely.

SIXTH FLOWER.

JESUS is lost in the temple, and obeys His Mother.

At Vespers, consider 3 fruits :

The Child's marvellous wisdom in teaching the Jews,
The inconsoleable search of His parents for Him,
His exemplary subjection to His gentle Mother.

SEVENTH FLOWER.

JESUS is baptized by John in the river Jordan.

At Compline, consider 3 fruits :

The great dignity of the Baptized, testified from heaven,
The great humility of the Baptist, shown by his words,
The great sacredness of Baptism, taught by this mystery.



Wednesday.

FIRST FLOWER.

JESUS fasts in the desert, and is tempted by Satan.

At Matins, consider 3 fruits :

The abstinence of Jesus, in this corporal austerity,
The wisdom of Jesus, in confounding the enemy,
The reverence shown to Jesus by the ministering angels.

SECOND FLOWER.

JESUS with His disciples is invited to the marriage feast.

At Prime, consider 3 fruits :

The prudence of Jesus, in the vocation of His disciples,
Their obedience, in promptly following Him,
His Mother's kindness, in obtaining the wine.

THIRD FLOWER.

JESUS is wearied with travel and with preaching.

At Tierce, consider 3 fruits :

The Truest of Teachers, in example and in word,
The great fatigues endured in these journeys,
The great ignorance of the multitudes He taught.

FOURTH FLOWER.

JESUS, the Good Shepherd, is followed by much people.

At Sext, consider 3 fruits :

The Good Shepherd, eager to feed His flock,
The populace, eager to make Him their King,
Jesus, indifferent to human praise.

FIFTH FLOWER.

JESUS heals the sick, and is blamed by the Scribes.

At None consider 3 fruits :

The diligence of the Physician, in services freely given,
The malignance of the disease, increasing daily,
The negligence of the sick, heedless of the remedy.

SIXTH FLOWER.

JESUS commands nature, and threatens evil spirits.

At Vespers, consider 3 fruits :

The wonderful power of Jesus, in coercing demons,
The obedience of creatures on which He lays command,
The wonderful experiences of His chosen disciples.

SEVENTH FLOWER.

JESUS is transfigured on Mount Tabor before His Apostles.

At Compline, consider 3 fruits :

The authority of the Witnesses seen and heard,
The great brightness of Jesus in His Transfiguration,
The joy of His Apostles at the vision.



Thursday.

FIRST FLOWER.

JESUS rides the ass's colt, honoured as King He weeps.
At Matins consider 3 fruits :

The humility of Jesus, in using the lowly ass,
The homage of the people, in the procession,
The calamities of the city, for which Jesus sheds tears.

SECOND FLOWER.

JESUS is anointed in Simon's house, and pardons sin.
At Prime consider 3 fruits :

The true repentance of Magdalen, in her public sorrow,
The Pharisee's false reverence, reproved by Jesus,
The clemency of Jesus, in excusing the sinner.

THIRD FLOWER.

JESUS casts forth the buyers and sellers from the temple.
At Tierce consider 3 fruits :

The example given by Jesus, in visiting the temple,
His dignity and authority in confuting the Pharisees,
The leniency of Jesus, in defending the adulteress.

FOURTH FLOWER.

JESUS raises Lazarus to life, and is Martha's Guest.

At Sext, consider 3 fruits :

The Jews' ingratitude, in driving Jesus hungry away,
The grief of the sisters at their loss of Lazarus,
The gratitude of Jesus, who consoles His hostess.

FIFTH FLOWER.

JESUS solaces His sad Mother, sharing in her grief.

At None, consider 3 fruits :

The anguish of the Mother, and her tender entreaties,
The solace of the Son, and His loving pleadings,
The compassion and devout admiration of the disciples.

SIXTH FLOWER.

JESUS is sold by Judas, and is condemned by the Jews.

At Vespers, consider 3 fruits :

The avarice of Judas, in selling his Master,
The guilt of the Jews, in their conspiracy,
The patience of Jesus in humbly permitting this.

SEVENTH FLOWER.

JESUS, serving His own, feeds them sacramentally.

At Compline, consider 3 fruits :

The sweetness of charity, in the ministration of Jesus,
The venom of perverseness, in the obduracy of Judas,
The lesson of piety, in the Apostles' devotion.



Friday.

FIRST FLOWER.

JESUS prays, is surrounded, seized, and mocked.

At Matins, consider 3 fruits :

His sorrowful going forth, and foretaste of the Passion,
The capture of the Lamb by treacherous wolves,
The disciples' shameful desertion of their Master.

SECOND FLOWER.

JESUS before the judges, is scoffed at and accused.

At Prime, consider 3 fruits :

The malice of the Pharisees, in their interrogations,
The exceeding humility of Jesus, in His replies,
The distress of the disciples at their Master's persecution.

THIRD FLOWER.

JESUS is scourged, spit upon, and crowned with thorns.

At Tierce, consider 3 fruits :

The innocence of Jesus, without remonstrance,
The sentence of the judge, without cause,
The barbarity of the torturers, without mercy.

FOURTH FLOWER.

JESUS is condemned, carries His cross, is crucified.

At Sext consider 3 fruits :

His whole weight resting on the three nails,
The dishonour of hanging between the thieves,
The strange impenitence of the hardened people.

FIFTH FLOWER.

JESUS, the Lamb of God, adorable in death, expires.

At None, consider 3 fruits :

How gently on the cross He declares His last will,
How willingly He offers His life to the Father,
How nature with portents proclaims her grief and horror.

SIXTH FLOWER.

JESUS, with His opened Side, is lowered from the cross.

At Vespers, consider 3 fruits :

The Body hanging lifeless, with all its beauty marred,
The water from His wounded Side, mingled with Blood,
The mourners sadly detaching Him from the cross.

SEVENTH FLOWER.

JESUS is anointed, and is laid with tears in the tomb.

At Compline, consider 3 fruits :

The Mother's anguish, in contemplating His Body,
The tender ministrations, in the preparation of the tomb,
The lamentation, when He is laid in the tomb.



Saturday.

FIRST FLOWER.

JESUS the Conqueror descends to hell, trampling the foe.

At Matins, consider 3 fruits :

The empire of our Saviour, in His triumph over death,
The desire of the Fathers, waiting for Jesus,
The ministry of Angels, preparing His way.

SECOND FLOWER.

JESUS joyfully breaks the bonds of the Fathers.

At Prime, consider 3 fruits :

The howling of hell at the bursting of its gates,
The dismay of the demons yielding their prey,
The joy of the Fathers at the opening of Paradise.

THIRD FLOWER.

JESUS draws His disciples in their grief to His Mother.

At Tierce, consider 3 fruits :

The great mourning of His Mother, and her tears,
The great fear of the brethren, hiding themselves,
The dire hatred of the Jews, in persecuting the Saints.

FOURTH FLOWER.

JESUS by His Passion binds us to remember Him.

At Sext, consider 3 fruits:

The character of the place where they crucified Him,
The atrocity of the torments they inflicted on Him,
The brutality of the soldiers who tortured Him.

FIFTH FLOWER.

JESUS provides Himself with witnesses after death.

At None, consider 3 fruits:

The perplexity of the Jews at the signs they see,
The resurrection of the dead, who appear to many,
The confirmation of the faithful, who believe in Christ.

SIXTH FLOWER.

JESUS foreknows the fervour of Magdalen and of all.

At Vespers, consider 3 fruits:

The reverence of the disciples condoling with His Mother,
The diligence of the women preparing their spices,
The folly of the soldiers in guarding the sepulchre.

SEVENTH FLOWER.

JESUS, having released the Fathers, returns to the tomb.

At Compline, consider 3 fruits:

The vision granted to the Fathers who escort Him,
The glory of His re-animated Body,
The soldiers' terror, when the stone is rolled away.



Sunday.

FIRST FLOWER.

JESUS rises, and appears in glory to His own.

At Matins, consider 3 fruits :

The anxiety of the disciples, remembering Jesus,
The benignity of their Master, in often appearing,
The joy they all felt, in being frequently comforted.

SECOND FLOWER.

JESUS ascends as King to the right hand of His Father.

At Prime, consider 3 fruits :

His affectionate love, in consoling those He leaves,
Their dejection, at their separation from Jesus,
The Angelic rejoicings, when He mounts on high.

THIRD FLOWER.

JESUS sends the Holy Ghost, and is everywhere preached,

At Tierce, consider 3 fruits :

The great gifts and consolations, for comforting the good,
The divers tongues, for preaching the faith,
The power of miracles, for converting the nations.

FOURTH FLOWER.

JESUS exalts His Mother above the Angelic Choirs.

At Sext, consider 3 fruits :

The assiduosity of the Saints attending their Lord,
The reverence of the Son embracing His Mother,
The glory of that Mother enthroned anear her Son.

FIFTH FLOWER.

JESUS is our Advocate in the Heavenly Court.

At None, consider 3 fruits :

The solicitude of Jesus in His care for us,
The ingratitude of men in thanksgiving,
The uncertainty of the end and the award we await.

SIXTH FLOWER.

JESUS is the just Judge and appointed King of all.

At Vespers, consider 3 fruits :

His infallible truth, in His judgment,
His invincible power, in His sentence.
His inflexible equity, in His unalterable decrees.

SEVENTH FLOWER.

JESUS is the Glory of His Saints, our Longed-for End.

At Compline, consider 3 fruits :

The abundance of delights, with untroubled peace,
The union of friends in true charity,
The eternal duration of bliss without alloy.

NOTE.

These Points for contemplation or meditation may be variously used :

- 1—To prevent distractions during the Seven Hours of the Divine Office ;
- 2—To give praise to God at intervals " seven times a day " ;
- 3—To serve as the seven morning exercises of a week ;
- 4—To serve as morning meditations for seven weeks, if only one Flower with its three Fruits is taken each day.

The Vatican editors of S. Bonaventure's works and F. Bonelli consider the *Opus Contemplationis* genuine, although the Venetian editors do not. We may then hope that the Points are thoughts which have been, as S. Philip says, in the heart of a Saint. In any case, the Flowers will be found to be most fair and fragrant, the Fruits most sweet and wholesome, for they are the Flowers and Fruits of the Tree of Life. " He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches : To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the paradise of my God." " As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow whom I desired ; and his fruit was sweet to my palate—Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples : because I languish with love."



